241 423 rapidly than does the full-time farmer who often seems to continue working unpracticable fields, which, by present standards, are uneconomic. He continues to work them for reasons which are a mixture of sentimental attachment, force of habit and, quite often, stark ignorance of the fact that the plots concerned are bringing him loss rather than profit. He does not indulge in cost-accounting.

241 464 433 This is the background to the present attempts to rescue Maltese farming from its two main difficulties:

(a) a drastic reduction in the agricultural labour force due to the retreat from the land, especially by the younger generation,

[654] (b) the fact that contemporary Maltese farming cannot produce a profit without subsidies and protection from foreign competition.

654 241 464 The answer to the labour problem is held to be mechanization, along with the education of the farmer in the use of better suited methods, crops, animals, etc., and maximum development of the land by means of low-interest Government loans to farmers. The accepted answer to (b) is in fact not an answer at all but entails the creation of an artificial farming economy in which Government subsidies and guaranteed markets enable the farmer to make some profit where he would otherwise sustain a heavy loss. The cost of this is the price which the Government is willing to pay in order to develop the Islands' only primary industry to the maximum and to encourage the farming community to remain on their farms.

The limited scope of these solutions emerges from the discussions of labour, mechanization and protective subsidies and guarantees which follow.

## LABOUR

178 462 [592] The decline of the peasant system in Malta and its replacement by what has been called commercial farming has been accompanied by changes in the family as the operating group within the farm. There has been no strictly formal division of labour by sex in Malta[20] but there is an 'accepted' division and this is important to an understanding of the present socio-economic upheaval in Maltese rural society.

562 462 178 In traditional and peasant Malta woman's place was certainly in the home. An old adage held that "Women should never appear but twice in public: the day they are married and when they are buried" (R/326, Vol. 1, p.80). Even today the countrywoman, especially in Gozo, still divides her activity between home, Church, and the fields worked by the

462 family, while her daughter, literate, emancipated and
562 'progressive' by contrast, wants to take up paid employment
178 outside the home or even outside the village and insists on a greater measure of social intercourse than would have been proper for her mother.

462 The home and the care of the children remains the sphere
178 of women and girls. The menfolk took part in such work only in exceptional cases, such as illness. Nowadays the men are often more inclined to interest themselves in this side of family life but, as often in a discussion of this nature, the range of divergence of practice defeats generalisation.

178 Until recently it was customary for most women and girls
462 to work, unpaid, alongside their menfolk in the fields,
288 especially when work was pressing as at harvest time.
464 Furthermore cotton was the work of women in most stages of its preparation (Section 1), while lace was almost entirely the work of women - particularly those whose age or infirmity excluded them from field work. Cotton is now of minor importance and lace-working is confined to the older
178 generations. The employment vacuum thus created is now
464 partly being filled by young women and girls seeking employment away from the family in clerical jobs, retailing, teaching and domestic service. Fewer work as hired farm-labourers than was the case a generation ago. Yet there remains an increasing number of unmarried girls today, educated far beyond field work, who cannot find employment to suit their aspirations or qualifications, whether because of the scarcity of suitable posts or on account of the attitude that persists in labelling paid employment fo a girl as somehow improper (Case I). Married women are, in any case, discouraged from taking or retaining paid employment throughout Malta (B/598).

241 Some farming families still retain the traditional
462 pattern of field work by the whole family (Case XI);
[178] others do not (Case VIII). In some cases the women and girls work occasionally with their menfolk (Case II). In the fields they are given hoeing, planting, reaping and picking jobs but heavier work and jobs considered skilled, such as spraying with insecticide, are left to the men (v. Case I on the division of family labour).

241 In general it appears that as the younger age-groups
592 are educated and emancipated unpaid field work is avoided.
[178] The only remuneration noted was limited to small 'pocket-
[465] money' donations and even these went to sons working full-time with their fathers (Cases X, XI) and not to daughters. Here then is the problem. The farmer is faced

241 (a) with the labour of members of his family limited,
592 in many cases, as far as the women and girls are concerned to casual assistance and to grudging work by his sons until they can find some paid employment away from the home farm, and

241 (b) with the high cost of non-family labour at between
464 £1 and 30/- per eight-hour day where a member of the family
[461] would have worked from early morning until sundown. Moreover
[465] the supply of hirable labour is by no means great nor readily available and, unless a general economic collapse forces a return to the land, there are no indications of any improvement in the position. Rather is agricultural labour likely to become scarcer and more costly.

241 The problem is considerably aggravated by the fact that
[461] as already suggested, the particular characteristics of Maltese farming demand an intensive application of manual labour, both in the maintainance of the more precarious fields as well as in cultivation. Something of the detail of this need emerges from a consideration of the timetable of the Maltese farmer both as regards the annual cycle of activity and the daily round of farm-work.

TIMETABLE

221 The timetable of the Maltese farmer is more diverse and
241 varied than is at first apparent. It is convenient to distinguish the daily timetable proper from the annual calendar of events. Under traditional peasant farming conditions there appears to have been a much greater degree of uniformity but as farming has been 'commercialized' so has the range of variety increased.

175 The peasant field-tiller depended on climate, on the
178 crop cycle and on the sun. The year's round of field-work
221 a century ago is recorded in an 1849 "Calendario dell'Agri-
241 coltore" (B/355) which listed the major farm activities of each month along with short articles on subjects of interest to the farmer of the time. Many of these topics, such as silk, olives, aniseed, cotton, honey, almonds, and tobacco, would not merit such prominence in a modern version of the
[234] Calendario[21]. More striking still is the emergence, since
[233] 1849, of dairying and stock-rearing, which was scarcely mentioned in the Calendario but has more recently grown to first importance for a large part of the farming community.

178 Changes of such magnitude over the century can be
241 expected to affect the routine of farm-work and of village and family life. In the mid-nineteenth century, Maltese farming was still very much more 'peasant' than 'commercial' and the change between then and now becomes clear when a

178
241 modern calendar of events is considered.

As random sample illustrations three farmers' accounts of their own work during 1957-58 are analyzed[22]. At least they reveal something of the variety that now exists between one farmer and the next.

241 (1) A full-time field worker (Case X) usually working
461 with his brother and a nephew and having some irrigable land.
221 An analysis of the routine of this man is given (Case X; E, v. Work Analysis) and, from the same material, Mitchell has made a detailed study of time/labour utilization (B/525). A summary of this, which is on the basis of the ten hours per day worked by each of the three men over the year 1957-8, is also included in Case X.

(2) The second example relates to an arable farmer mainly concerned with irrigated produce (Case XI; E, v. Work
●[592] Analysis). This man is helped in the fields by his wife and family. The analysis illustrates the main features of this 'irrigated' farmer's year (although in the year studied there was an exceptional loss of time in the Autumn due to storm damage) and should be compared with (1) above. Irrigation accounts for about a quarter of the months May-July but occupies a mere two afternoons in the period November-February. Cutting and reaping accounts for even more time in July than does irrigation: by October plowing is the largest single item apart from "No work (storms)". In November, planting and sowing account for slightly more time than "collecting greenery" and is by far the main work of December (potatoes). General cultivation work occupies much of the next two months but pruning and grafting of vines is the biggest single item of February. The parallel between this and (1) is clear, apart from the special emphasis, on fruit - largely apples - in the former case.

234 (3) A Goats' milk producer with subsidiary cash-cropping
221 (Case II; E, v. Work Analysis) provides the third
461 sample study. In 1957 - 58 this herdsman spent all but thirty afternoons "grazing the goats" - on only one Sunday or 'festa' day did he not go out with his animals. This illustrates an important feature. While Sundays and Holy Days are normally kept free of field-work, work with animals has to be allowed. The herdsman is consequently much more tied to his farm than is the predominently arable farmer. He has a set daily schedule of feeding and milking the animals and cleaning out their stalls, etc., and can expect to have to adhere to this especially if he is working alone or with very little help. In fact the herdsman spends a considerable amount of his working year on

*159 512 794 cafes, clubs, etc., it remains the centre of village affairs and the focus of activity, secular as well as religious.

Pawlu is one of the farmers of this village, but his ●592 178 children are not likely to be farmers. Therefore can they *159 remain of the village? As yet it has patently little to offer their education and culture and no apparent opportunity for a livelihood at their new and higher standards. They are leaving farming and are leaving the village as well in search of the means of earning a living - other than in farming.

## SUMMARY of CASE I

*159 423 427 (A large scale Gozitan goats' milk producer with a considerable land holding)

A. Land.

[311]

- Area held in 1956: 18⅝ tmien, 1957: 30½ tmien, 1958: 42½ tmien, the additions being almost entirely in the form of grazing land. The present holding is in 26 plots, rented from several landlords including Church, Civil Government and private individuals. Owns one small plot and sublets several others from neighbouring farmers. Plots scattered over considerable area in Gharb and St. Lawrens districts. Rent totals £23.14.0 p.a., ranging from 21/6 per tomna for cultivable (dry) land to 4/- per tomna for rough grazing.
- Previously held a further 20 tmien, 3 of which have been sub-let or exchanged and 17 abandoned owing to inaccessibility.

*159 423 311 B. Utilisation.

| | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 |
|---|---|---|---|
| House | ⅛ | ⅛ | ⅛ |
| Vines | ⅛ | ⅛ | ⅛ |
| Prickly pear | ⅛ | ⅛ | ⅛ |
| Fodders | 8½ | 10½ | 14½ |
| Vegetables | 8⅝ | 6½ | 2⅝ |
| Rough Grazing | - | 12 | 24 |
| Unused | ⅛ | ⅛ | ⅛ |
| Total | 18⅝ | 30½ | 42½ tmien |

*159 231 C. Livestock. (Nov. 1957)

36 goats, 8 kids
2 cows
1 sheep
100 poultry
1 horse

*159 401 [427] [456] D. Capital.

- Land all rented save one small plot.
- Appears to be amassing capital from profits on milk production.
- No specialised equipment.

*159 464 E. Labour.

- No permanent hired help.
- One son works full time on the farm, help from other children.

*159 433 [434] F. Production and Sales.

- Milk is the main item of income to which occasional small sales of vegetables are the only addition.
- Sample daily feed for 1 cow yielding c.3 gallons